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Chairman: Mr. Galuska (Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Agenda item 111: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions *(continued)* (A/C.3/54/L.91, L.94, L.95 and L.99)

1. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that, at the request of a number of delegations, action on certain draft resolutions was being postponed, until Monday, 22 November, in the case of draft resolutions A/C.3/54/L.62 (and the amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.101), A/C.3/54/L.79, A/C.3/54/L.82, A/C.3/54/L.85 and A/C.3/54/L.86, and until the afternoon meeting on Friday, 19 November, in the case of draft resolutions A/C.3/54/L.60 (and the amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.92), A/C.3/54/L.81, A/C.3/54/L.91, A/C.3/54/L.95, A/C.3/54/L.63 and A/C.3/54/L.87/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.94, Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

2. **The Chairman**, after stating that draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.94 had no programme budget implications, reminded members that Guinea, Mauritania and Turkey had joined the sponsors when the draft resolution had been introduced. He announced that Burundi and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had also become sponsors.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.94 was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.99, Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

4. **The Chairman**, after stating that draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.99 had no programme budget implications, said that the following countries had also become sponsors of the draft resolution when it had been introduced: Croatia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. He invited the Secretary to read out the changes to the text made orally by the representative of Algeria during the introduction of the draft resolution.

5. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the words "requirements there" at the end of paragraph 22 had been replaced by the words "needs of refugees".

6. **Ms. Samah** (Algeria) announced that Colombia and Spain had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution and said that the following changes should be made to the English text: in the first line of the eighth preambular paragraph, the order of the words "resolutely to" should be reversed; in the thirteenth preambular paragraph, the word "comprise" in the second line should be replaced by the word "are"; and in paragraph 4, the order of the words "observe scrupulously" should be reversed. She also pointed out that in the first line of paragraph 5, in all languages, the words "of the thirtieth anniversary" had been omitted and should be reinserted.

7. **The Chairman** announced that Bangladesh, Chile, Haiti, Jamaica, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Suriname, the United States of America and Venezuela had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.99, as revised, was adopted without a vote.*

Agenda item 116: Human rights questions *(continued)*:

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms *(continued)* (A/C.3/54/L.62 and amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.101, A/C.3/54/L.71/Rev.1, L.79, L.83, L.84 and L.85)

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62, Human rights and cultural diversity

9. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on a point of order, said that, to his knowledge, the postponement of consideration of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 had not been requested by the sponsors and he hoped that the Committee could take action on the text as planned.

10. **The Chairman** said that, in requesting that the Committee should take action on draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 at the current meeting, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran was invoking the provisions of rule 117 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which stated that "[a] representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the

closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the committee is in favour of the closure, the Chairman shall declare the closure of the debate. The Chairman may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule." He explained that, according to the Legal Counsel, the fact of being opposed to closure was tantamount to postponing consideration of the draft resolution. He therefore invited two speakers opposed to the closure of the debate to take the floor, after which the motion would be put to the vote.

11. **Mr. Rytovuori** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that his delegation had had in-depth discussions with the principal sponsors of the draft resolution and had assured them of its readiness to continue the discussions as long as necessary in order to reach a consensus. It was a question of great importance which was closely linked to the item considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting concerning dialogue among civilizations. The European Union was, moreover, one of the sponsors of the draft resolution submitted on the subject. Furthermore, his delegation had proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 which had been issued as document A/C.3/54/L.101 and on which the principal sponsors of the draft resolution had not yet made known their response. For those reasons, and in the spirit of dialogue and diversity for which the draft resolution called, the Union believed that it would be in the interest of the question that the discussion between the sponsors of the draft resolution and the sponsors of the amendments thereto should continue and it was accordingly opposed to the closure of the debate.

12. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on a point of order, supported by Mr. Bhatti (Pakistan), said that his delegation had in no way requested closure of the debate or of consideration of the amendments. It hoped that the Committee would proceed as usual to consider the draft resolution as envisaged in the agenda, after which it might perhaps decide to defer its decision.

13. **The Chairman** said that he was required to conduct the Committee's debates in accordance with the rules of procedure. He pointed out that a proposal that the Committee should take action on draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 at the current meeting was tantamount to a proposal for the closure of debate under the terms of rule 117; that was a legal matter which had no impact on the debate as such. It would be helpful if the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran would confirm that he had proposed that the Commission should take a decision on draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 at the current meeting, or indicate exactly what he had meant.

14. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) requested that the Committee should continue its consideration of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 in accordance with the agenda and see in due course whether a delegation would request that the vote on the draft resolution should be postponed or deferred.

15. *The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.*

16. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked which delegations had requested that consideration of the draft resolution should be postponed.

17. **The Chairman** replied that it had been the delegations of Algeria and Finland.

18. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), referring to rule 120 of the rules of procedure, observed that document A/C.3/54/L.101, which contained the amendments proposed by the European Union, had only been distributed that morning, whereas, in view of the length and substantive content of the amendments, it should have been distributed well before. The delay was all the more unacceptable in that his delegation had made the initial text of the draft resolution, accompanied by explanatory notes, available to interested delegations in good time, and had then quickly sent by fax to all delegations, so that they could consider it at leisure, a copy of the new text, drafted on the basis of the observations of a number of delegations and in the light of the provisions of the relevant instruments and the views on the question expressed on several occasions by the Secretary-General. However, the sponsors of the draft resolution agreed to postpone consideration of it until Monday, 22 November.

19. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to postpone action on the draft resolution until Monday, 22 January.

20. *It was so decided.*

21. **Ms. Mesdoua** (Algeria) said that her country had never requested that consideration of the draft resolution should be postponed. She regretted the lack

of transparency shown by the sponsors of the amendments, which did not reflect the usual spirit of cooperation of members of the Committee. She was gratified, however, that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.62 had agreed to postpone consideration thereof.

22. **Mr. Rytovuori** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he had sympathy for the sponsors of the draft resolution but thought that, contrary to what the representative of Algeria had said, the sponsors of the amendments had shown a spirit of cooperation in that they had discussed almost every day since the previous week with the principal sponsors of the draft resolution the amendments which they wished to make to the text. Moreover, at the beginning of the week, they had submitted a document in which they had commented on the initial version of the draft resolution and, on Wednesday, 17 November, they had submitted further comments on the second version. It was because they had noted on the previous day that there had been no response to their comments that they had decided, in view of the short time left for the Committee to finish its work, to introduce the amendments at the current meeting.

23. **Mr. Haynes** (Canada) said that the statements of delegations concerning the draft resolution were not in keeping either with its spirit or with the facts. His delegation, which had demonstrated its interest in the draft resolution since the beginning of the session, had submitted amendments informally to the Iranian delegation the previous week but had never been able to have a serious discussion of them with that delegation. The lesson that could be drawn from the situation was that delegations should hold more open and more transparent consultations. His delegation joined the sponsors of the amendments submitted by the representative of Finland.

24. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) took note of the explanations given by the representative of Finland. He believed, however, like the representatives of Algeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran, that it was unacceptable to submit amendments at such a late stage and he hoped that such incidents would not recur.

25. **Mr. Bhatti** (Pakistan) said he was gratified that the question of the amendments had been settled amicably, but he agreed with the representative of Canada that the Committee should in future hold open consultations and demonstrate greater transparency. In particular, it would be helpful if, in difficult situations, the Chairman could communicate any information he had concerning the intentions of delegations.

26. **Mr. Yu Wenzhe** (China) said that he had no fixed idea on the question of the postponement of consideration of the draft resolution and that he was ready to work with other delegations on the text. He noted, however, that his delegation, which was one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, had never been informed in advance of the various requests for postponement of its consideration and that the members of the Committee should have shown greater transparency. He believed, moreover, that they should in future avoid proposing long substantive amendments at the end of the Committee's debates.

27. **Ms. de Armas Garcia** (Cuba) said that the postponement of consideration of the draft resolution would give delegations more time to consider the amendments. As the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran had indicated, the sponsors of the draft resolution had worked with the greatest transparency by sending the text of the draft resolution to all delegations in good time. It was true, moreover, that, since the amendments had required a great deal of work, it was not surprising that they had been submitted at the last moment. It was surprising, however, that their sponsors had not informed the sponsors of the draft resolution that they wished to postpone consideration of the draft resolution when they had discussed the amendments with them until the last moment. Her delegation was convinced that the additional time which the Committee would have to consider the amendments would help it to reach a consensus on the text, the only one that referred to cultural rights, which had so often been mentioned during the session and which were so important.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83: Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization

28. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83, which had no programme budget implications and which had been orally revised by the representative of the United States of America when it had been introduced. The following had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution when it had been introduced: Central African Republic, Cyprus, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Greece,

Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Malta, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine, Venezuela and Zambia.

29. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the revisions which had been made to the draft resolution. In the second line of the thirteenth preambular paragraph, the word "December" had been inserted before "2000", and in the third and fourth lines of that paragraph the words "in its role as coordinator of United Nations electoral assistance" had been deleted. In paragraph 3, the words "of the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat" had been deleted and the words "in its role as coordinator of United Nations electoral assistance" had been inserted after the words "*Requests* the Electoral Assistance Division".

30. **Ms. Savage** (United States of America) said that Croatia had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

31. **The Chairman** announced that Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Congo, Costa Rica, Eritrea, Ghana, Liechtenstein, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Togo had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

32. **Mr. Bhatti** (Pakistan), referring to paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, dealing with programmes of assistance for governance which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was carrying out in cooperation with other relevant organizations and institutions, said he believed that United Nations agencies and programmes should intervene only when it was within their mandate to do so and that, accordingly, UNDP should not continue the aforementioned programmes of assistance. For that reason, he hoped that the Committee would take a separate vote on paragraph 8 of the draft resolution.

33. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba), explaining her vote before the vote, said that the draft resolution was not in keeping with the principles established in the Charter and international law. The United Nations was not competent to pass judgement on national electoral processes, which were within the sovereignty of States and peoples, and it should not make the granting of electoral assistance subject to an evaluation of such processes. It was unacceptable that the Electoral Assistance Division should assume functions which belonged intrinsically to Member States. It was also unacceptable that UNDP should exercise control over the political institutions of States on any pretext whatsoever, especially since that represented a departure from its principal function for which it already lacked the necessary resources. The Organization should therefore limit itself to deciding whether or not it should accede to requests from States for electoral assistance.

34. Her delegation noted, in that connection, that to agree to flout the principles of the Charter and of international law in certain areas of the Organization's work and to challenge the sovereignty and political independence of States was a matter of particular concern at the very time when unique models of government and development were being established throughout the world. She also commented that the guidelines referred to in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution had never been considered or approved by Member States and that the Commission on Human Rights resolution referred to in the sixth preambular paragraph sought to impose a new right, the right to democracy, on the basis of an ambiguous concept of democracy the premises of which had never been analysed and debated. That created a dangerous precedent. The promotion of democracy, the need for which was quite clear to her delegation, should be based on full respect for the principles of the sovereignty of States and of non-interference in their internal affairs, and consequently on the right of each State to decide freely and in a sovereign manner on its political, economic and social system. For all the reasons she had stated, her delegation would be unable to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

35. **Mr. Yu Wenzhe** (China) said that his delegation wished to make a reservation concerning the sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which referred to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/57 of 27 April 1999 and, in particular, to the provision in which the Commission urged the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and Member States to promote and consolidate democracy. His delegation had repeatedly stated that it did not wish that resolution to be mentioned in the text of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83.

36. Although his country supported United Nations organizations which provided electoral assistance to Member States when that assistance was within their mandate, his delegation wished to emphasize that those

organizations should only act at the express request of States, with strict respect for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and taking into account the situation of the States concerned. Electoral assistance should not serve as a means of imposing a given set of values.

37. As his delegation's position was not clearly reflected in the draft resolution, it would abstain in the votes on paragraph 8 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

38. **Ms. Chan** (Singapore) said that her delegation had not become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

39. A recorded vote was taken on paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam, Yemen.

40. *Paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83 was adopted by 120 votes to none, with 27 abstentions.*

41. **Ms. Elisha** (Benin) said that the word "Benin" had been omitted in the thirteenth preambular paragraph and asked that it should be reinserted.

42. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83 as a whole.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon

Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam.

43. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.83 was adopted by 141 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.84: Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

44. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would take action on the draft resolution at a later stage.

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.58, L.60 and amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.92, L.63, L.76, L.81 and amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.93, L.82 and amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.97, L.86 and amendments thereto issued as document A/C.3/54/L.96, and L.87/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76: Situation of human rights in Myanmar

45. **The Chairman** said that draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76 had no programme budget implications and pointed out that Germany, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had become sponsors of the draft resolution at the time of its introduction.

46. **Ms. Funered** (Sweden) said that Finland, Iceland, Malta and the Republic of Korea had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution. Orally revising the text, she said that a new preambular paragraph should be inserted at the end of the preamble, just before paragraph 1, which would read: "*Noting* that the Government of Myanmar, as a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, has submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for its consideration,".

47. **Mr. Win Mra** (Myanmar), speaking in explanation of his delegation's position concerning draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76, said that the text was no different from that of resolutions adopted at previous sessions and was aimed at exerting unjustified pressure on the Government of Myanmar. Most of the paragraphs had been carried over from resolution 53/162 and the text had been reinforced with paragraphs lifted from the resolution on Myanmar adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session and with allegations taken from the biased reports of the Special Rapporteur. The Commission on Human Rights was a body of limited membership and the incorporation of elements of a resolution of that body into a resolution of the Third Committee led to a flawed resolution since it did not reflect the views of all members and gave a distorted view of the situation in the country. Furthermore, the report of the Special Rapporteur (A/54/499) was based on sources which were ill-disposed towards the Government and people of Myanmar and could therefore not be taken seriously. The draft resolution was motivated solely by political considerations and had two objectives: first, to support the exaggerated political grievances of a political party and an individual, and, second, to sully the image of the Government of Myanmar, which, with justification, had refused to bow to the unrealistic demands for change and for a new direction in the internal political process of the country.

48. The grave concern expressed in paragraph 8 of the draft resolution about the alleged persecution of members of the National League for Democracy was unfounded. The allegations came from the League, whose members had resigned of their own free will. Their resignations reflected the frustration felt by members of that party over the policy of devastation pursued by Aung San Suu Kyi, who had called for the cessation of investment in, and the imposition of economic sanctions against, the country. The wording of paragraph 9 was misleading and constituted an unwarranted attack on a domestic political process that had been agreed upon following the 1990 elections

with a view to the development of a new constitution and the establishment of a democratic system in which all sectors of society would participate. The National League for Democracy had participated until November 1995, when it had decided unilaterally to withdraw from the National Convention and had taken dangerous steps to impede the peaceful process towards democracy. It should be remembered that it was the Government which had taken the initiative of holding meetings with the National League for Democracy with a view to enhancing mutual confidence and embarking on substantive discussions. Those initiatives had not succeeded because the National League for Democracy had taken the irrational and dangerous decision to issue illegally a declaration establishing a so-called Committee representing the People's Parliament, the establishment of which had been opposed by the ethnic groups and categorically denounced by the people. To note the existence of that Committee, as had been done in paragraph 10, was to intervene unwittingly, but with an ulterior motive. His delegation took strong exception to the wording used in that paragraph. With regard to paragraphs 11 and 12, the wording trivialized the sincere efforts made by the Government to honour its obligations under the Forced Labour Convention. Myanmar had reviewed its legislation in order to bring it into line with the Convention by issuing Order No. 1/99 of 14 May 1999, which put an end to the power to requisition forced labour under the Towns Act and the Village Act and stipulated that those who failed to comply should be punished. That legal action taken by the Government, which had been notified to the International Labour Organization, was totally undermined by paragraph 12, which needlessly urged the Government to cease the widespread and systematic use of forced labour. His delegation therefore rejected the negative elements in those two paragraphs. The allegations in paragraphs 5 and 14 concerning the use of children as forced labour and the violations of women's rights were an outrage against the collective conscience of Myanmar, a country where those two vulnerable groups of the population were accorded a special place. Their rights were protected not only traditionally and socially, but also legally. In 1991, Myanmar had become a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and had, accordingly, in 1993, enacted a Child Law, which protected children against exploitation, illegal employment and maltreatment. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Government of Myanmar was taking the necessary measures for the advancement of women, *inter alia*, by establishing a national mechanism and programmes to that end. It was worth mentioning, in particular, the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Violence against Women, which was responsible for monitoring violations of the kind reported by the Special Rapporteur. Paragraph 15 strongly urged the Government of Myanmar to ensure full respect for human rights, including economic and social rights. For a developing country like Myanmar, economic and social development was of vital importance. While the Government was at present paying particular attention to the basic needs of the people, it was also making every effort on other fronts. However, the country was facing many obstacles on the economic front since the multilateral financial institutions had suspended their assistance since 1988 and many Western countries had followed suit by imposing sanctions. Relying on its own resources and on cooperative assistance from its neighbours, Myanmar had been able to alleviate the economic and social difficulties and thus improve the situation. The artificial obstacles placed in the way of the country's efforts should therefore be removed so that it could pursue its development. With regard to the displacement of persons and the refugee flows mentioned in paragraph 16, Myanmar attached great importance to the concept of international solidarity and the sharing of the burden in the matter of the protection of refugees and displaced persons. While conflict constituted the immediate cause of population movements in Myanmar, the root causes were grounded in the past. The country's policy was aimed at eliminating those root causes in order to find a lasting solution to that important question. The Government was prepared to welcome refugees who returned voluntarily. In conclusion, despite the efforts made to establish the facts in certain paragraphs, his delegation totally rejected the allegations contained in draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76 and dissociated itself from it.

49. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.*

50. **Ms. Woldberg** (Netherlands) said that, although, as in previous years, her delegation had not been able to be a sponsor of the draft resolution, the Netherlands was very much concerned about the situation of human

rights in Myanmar and regretted that the text of the draft resolution did not take into account, in stronger language and in greater detail, the violations of human rights in that country. It would, moreover, have been preferable to have a separate paragraph concerning violations of the rights of children, in particular the use of children as forced labour, on which the Special Rapporteur had reported.

51. It was regrettable that the recent increased contacts between the Government of Myanmar and the international community had not resulted in a tangible improvement in the situation in the field. Moreover, the invitation addressed by the Government of Myanmar to the International Labour Organization did not take account of the decision adopted in June 1999 by the International Labour Conference, which excluded any contact or technical assistance which was not the subject of a recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry of ILO. Lastly, it was regrettable that the Government of Myanmar persisted in not cooperating fully with the competent mechanisms of the United Nations, in particular with the Special Rapporteur.

52. **Ms. Buck** (Canada) said that the text of the draft resolution gave a better account of the seriousness of the situation of human rights in Myanmar than that of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly the previous year, but that it should have been couched in more urgent language. Her delegation had therefore decided once again not to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

53. **Mr. Umeda** (Japan) said that his delegation, which had not joined the sponsors, welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which, while expressing the concerns of the international community concerning the situation of human rights in Myanmar, recognized that some progress had been made. His delegation believed that the draft resolution was aimed not at isolating Myanmar from the international community, but at encouraging it to implement the recommendations made to it. The dialogue between the Government of Myanmar and the National League for Democracy was therefore of the greatest importance.

54. His delegation was also gratified that the Government of Myanmar had indicated that it would seriously consider the possibility of a visit by the Special Rapporteur and that it had addressed an invitation to the International Labour Organization. It hoped that the Government of Myanmar would continue its efforts with a view to improving the situation of human rights in the country, making progress towards democracy and achieving closer cooperation with the competent United Nations machinery. His delegation was prepared to assist it in those efforts.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.